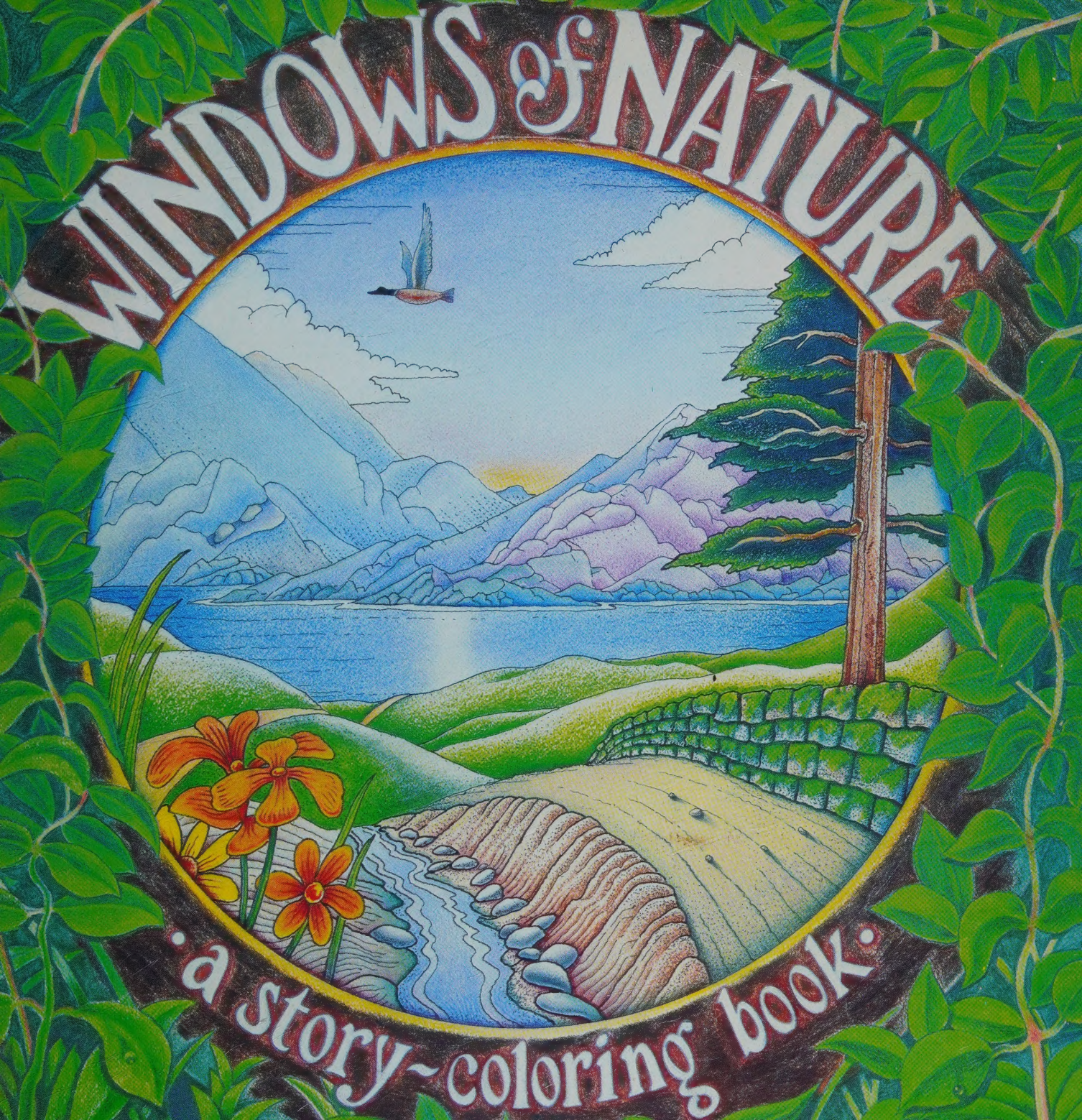




WINDOWS & NATURE

a story-coloring book



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WINDOWS & NATURE



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a story-coloring book

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DREAM VOYAGE

There once was set an island
Like a jewel upon the sea,
Where wild birds and beasts lived
In peaceful harmony.
A child, lost deep in pleasant dreams,
Sailed slowly up to shore,
And setting foot upon the earth
He started to explore.
Climbing trees, scaling cliffs,
There seemed to be no end,
Until the light of dawn
Found him home in bed again.



THE BRIDGE WITH A PURPOSE

There once was a covered bridge who felt sad. For even though it was a bridge, and meant to be used to cross a rushing mountain stream, it was built deep in the wilderness. No one ever used or even knew about it anymore. Year after year it waited, feeling lonely and forsaken, but worst of all, useless.

One Spring day a flock of snow geese flew by on their way north. Tired from a long flight, they sought shelter beneath the sturdy wooden beams of the old bridge. There they spent a comfortable night, and in the morning decided to make their nests in the soft grass beneath the bridge. After a week of nest building they were finished, and the snow geese relaxed in their new surroundings.

When the bridge realized it had become a home, its whole world seemed to change, for now it had a real purpose. And if bridges could smile, this one surely would have grinned until it cracked a timber.



TALE OF THE MISHA

The Misha were a tribe who lived long ago, many years before you or I. In every direction, all around their town, there was a big lake.

Around the edge of the lake was a thick growth of grass and reeds, cattails and weeds, called a *marsh*. This marsh was known as the Misha-Marsh — a wonderful home for all the little creatures who lived in it.

One of them, a musically inspired Misha-Marsh mouse, used to sing a song to the snowy egrets as they looked out over the calm water.

This is the song that the Misha-Marsh mouse sings, to this very day, in the land where the Misha-Marsh grows:

*All my friends are happy to say
We couldn't ask for a happier day
Sitting or flying, to us it's all one,
When we live in the light of the
MISHA-MARSH
SUN.*



THE STORM

The summer had turned to autumn, and autumn was just beginning to turn to winter. Leaves that had changed their color were now crackly-dry, and ready to fall from their parent trees. Rows upon rows of rain-laden clouds marched solemnly across the darkening sky, and there was the unmistakable smell of rain in the air.

Swiftly the storm struck, with torrents of rain and mighty gusts of wind. Thunder and lightning shook the sky. Birds and forest creatures scurried to their shelters. Only the plant kingdom stood without a hiding place.

Those flowers and trees that tried to withstand Nature's fury broke off as though they were straw, and joined the tumbleweeds that flew through the wind and rain swept countryside. Only those that bent with the force of the storm survived.



I AM THE SUN

I am the Sun. I fill the solar system with light; without me, the earth would be in darkness.

Is there a time when you can't remember me? Though sometimes you may not see me, clouds cannot hide me forever.

I warmed the earth in the years before the dinosaurs; sent rays of golden light into the hearts and minds of the very first people; and smiled on the morning of your birth.

I will glow all the days of your life, and the reflection of my radiant light will shine in the eyes of your great-great-grandchildren.



A COUNTRY SCENE

Out in the country with green rolling hills,
Haystacks and fences and wooden windmills,
A berry bush lives, with its berries so ripe
That you just want to eat them, bite after bite.
They always taste good, and it is no lie,
That berries taste best when they're baked in a pie
So some afternoon when you're feeling just right,
Come out and pick berries to your heart's delight!



THE BUNNY WHO WANTED TO GROW UP

Once there was a little bunny who wanted to grow up to be a big rabbit. It tried as hard as it could, doing things like hopping, running, leaping, and playing. But no matter how hard it tried, it still remained a little bunny.

One day, feeling that it would never grow up, the little bunny had an idea. It would ask a big rabbit to tell it *how* to grow up!

The little bunny had to wait a long time before it got up the nerve to ask, but when it did, the big rabbit smiled.

"Little bunny," it said. "You **might not** know it, but you're growing bigger every day. Before long, you'll be a big rabbit too, without **even trying**."

The little bunny, happy to hear the words of the big rabbit, spent the rest of its days hopping, running, leaping, and playing, and sure enough, grew up without even trying!



THE PROUD LAKE

Once there was a beautiful mountain lake. Many fish swam in its blue waters, and forest creatures considered the lake a wonderful friend.

However, it began to boast. The little ponds around the edge of the lake were the most affected, as they too were made of water. When the lake told them how little they were, compared to how big it was, they felt very sad and began to cry.

A goose, passing by, saw the sadness of the little ponds. But before he could ask them why there were crying, the lake spoke.

"Tell me, goose, in the presence of all the forest creatures and little ponds, am I not the greatest lake in the whole world? You have seen more than anyone else from your flight high in the air; surely you are the best judge!"

The goose could tell that the lake had been boasting, and said,

"Dear lake, you are surely a great lake. But please don't forget that you are only one part of a vast water cycle, and are created by all the little streams and ponds which pour into you. Without them you wouldn't even exist (except, perhaps, as a muddy puddle)!"

And from that day on, the lake was never heard to boast again.



SONG OF THE OWL

I am the owl, and let it be known
Not far from your house, a tree is my home.
'Tis here that I send out my call of deep peace
When evening has beckoned for daylight to cease.
And even if porcupines laugh at my song,
I don't let their laughter tell me I'm wrong.
So listen, I'll gladly sing you a tune
While nightingales bathe in the light of the moon.



THE YOUNG STREAM AND THE FOREST

One day a young stream asked the forest, "Do you know the way to the ocean?"

The forest paused a long time before answering the stream.

"Why do you ask, little stream?"

"I ask because I feel lost, and doubt that I'll ever find the ocean. You seem so wise, having been around for so very long."

"Well," said the forest, "there is a secret which will lead you to the ocean. In order to hear it, however, you must completely relax, and not think about anything . . . even the ocean!"

When the stream did as the forest said, it found itself moving over rocks, through gulleys, across fields, down hillsides, and finally, into the ocean itself, where all its questions ended.



THE KING'S DEER

In ancient India there lived a King who loved his people and loved his kingdom, but above all else he loved his pet deer.

Every morning the King would walk about in the royal garden, calling its name until it came. Then, with various leafy tidbits from the royal kitchen, he would feed his beloved deer by hand.

After a full and noble life the King reached his chosen age, and lay down upon his deathbed. In a moment's time he saw his entire life flash before his eyes, but one thought was stronger than all the rest. The King called out,

"My deer! I cannot remember anything more beautiful than you!" A moment later he lay dead, with a peaceful smile upon his lips.

The royal physician, on his way home, walked through the garden. To his amazement he saw not one, but two deer, frolicking joyfully with each other in the early morning mist, as if they'd been friends forever.



STAR, THE GOLDEN SPARROW

Singing in a meadow or just flying through the air,
Star, the golden sparrow, spent her days without a care.
And when the Springtime came along with daphne, thyme, and sage,
She fell in love with Shree-Kar who was nearly twice her age.
Together they collected twigs and little bits of straw
To build a sturdy, handsome nest without a single flaw,
And sure enough, before too long, the baby birds were born
Beneath a rising sun upon a dew-drop summer morn.



THE OCEAN AND THE SEASHORE

A long time ago, before there were any living creatures on the earth, the ocean fell in love with the shore. Its love was so strong that it completely covered the land. But, as in so many love stories, the shore did not like to be overwhelmed by the love of the ocean. Even though the shore knew how much it was loved, it wanted some time alone to feel the wind and the sun.

When the ocean realized how the shore felt, its heart was broken. What could it do? Every day it grew sadder and sadder, and its waters began to withdraw from the shore.

The moon, looking down from the sky, saw the plight of the lovesick sea. Out of her wisdom and compassion, she made the tides, and turned the sadness of the ocean into joy.

For a part of every day, the ocean embraced its beloved shore; then the water rolled away, leaving the shore to bask in the wind and sun.

And to this very day, the sea and the shore live happily together in love.



THE REFLECTION IN THE WATER

Once there was a little chipmunk named Flora, who thought she was a flower. Every day she would sit overlooking the river without a care in the world. The rain washed her fur, the sun warmed her ears, and the wind dried her nose.

One day another chipmunk happened to be passing by, and upon seeing Flora he exclaimed,

"You're sitting so still I almost thought you were a flower!"

"*I am* a flower!" said Flora, in a whisper.

"No you're not, silly. You're a chipmunk! And if you won't believe me, look in the river."

Flora gently bent her head over the edge of the riverbank, but could only see the swirling, muddy water.

"There's nothing to see except the river," she said. "You must be trying to tease me!"

The other chipmunk shook his head. "You need clear, quiet water to see yourself in. Try over there, by that dandelion."

Flora walked over to where the visitor had pointed. Sure enough, when she looked into the clear, quiet water, she saw the reflection of her own furry face.

"Why, I am a chipmunk!" she said. And from that day on, Flora never forgot who she really was.



THE BIRDS OF SUNRISE MOUNTAIN

Once there was a pair of birds who lived high on top of Sunrise Mountain. They had lived together for so long that you could hardly tell them apart. Their children had grown up and flown away long ago, but their love was as young as the day they had met.

In the mornings they would wake to see the sunrise. Later, if they were hungry, they'd go out for a breakfast flight. At noon they would take a nap in the shade of the old white pine, and in the evening they would tell wonderful stories to each other, all about the beautiful life that was theirs to share.

Then together they would sing their favorite song, which always made the mountain smile:

*We've flown down to the canyon floor,
Looked up to the rim, and flew around some more,
We've flown out to the western sea,
But after years of passing fountains, rivers, lakes, and trees,
It's high on Sunrise Mountain where we really love to be!*



THE KING AND THE FOREST

There once was a King of Baklavia who wanted everything done his way. Because of this, he would get upset for the slightest reason, and explode with no cause.

One day, while riding through the royal forest, the King accidentally brushed against a tree. He fell from his horse, and was bruised. Angry from the pain, he called for the royal woodcutter.

"Beginning tomorrow morning, I want you and your workers to cut down the entire forest. Never have I been so insulted!"

The great tree spirit, hearing the King's rash orders, spoke to him in a dream that night.

"O King, you must not continue with your plan of destruction. How many years will you live, each day regretting this decision? Your castle walls will look out over barren fields, ten thousand stumps will speak of your foolishness; and where will your daughter play, when the forest is no more?"

The King, having heard the voice of the great tree spirit, was moved to tears. He asked for forgiveness, and sent a royal messenger to stop the woodcutter from committing the terrible deed.

Thus tragedy was avoided and the King, having learned a great lesson, gave thanks to the trees whenever he rode through the royal forest of Baklavia.



THE BUTTERFLY'S DANCING PARTNERS

Every morning as the sun appeared in the eastern sky, a butterfly would rise up with the dew and begin to dance.

One day, as it danced across the meadow, the butterfly looked up and saw two birds flying together. It thought, "All this time I've been missing a dancing partner!" From that moment on, the butterfly searched high and low for another soul to dance with. Days turned into weeks, and still there was no sign of a partner.

Coming upon a hill of wildflowers, the butterfly called out, "Who will dance with me?"

The flowers bowed, shook in the breeze, and said, "Dear butterfly, we can't join you in the air. But as long as you live and as long as we grow, our dance of the earth we will gladly give to you."

Happily, the butterfly flew among the flowers, knowing it now had not one, but ten thousand dancing partners.



SONG OF THE WATERFALL

Even when the island rests,
And birds lay sleeping in their nests,
Down upon the rocks it crashes,
Falling through with silver splashes.
Clear as glass to bubbling foam,
It's never still but always home.
An orchestra of stream-sounds call,
And ever sings the waterfall.



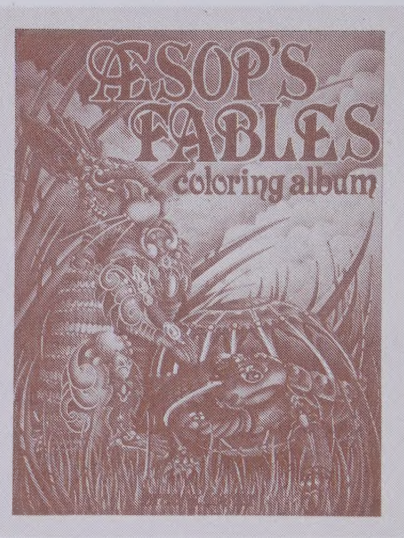
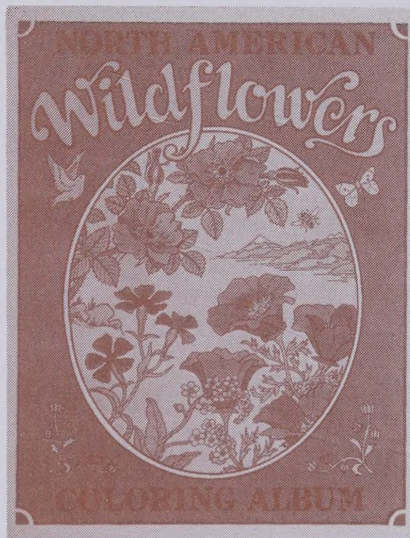
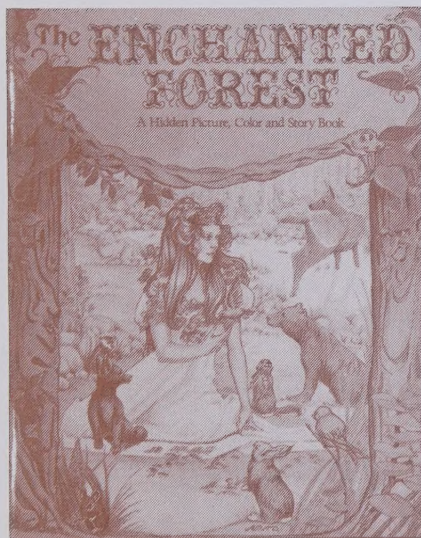
TALE OF A HAPPY MAN

Once upon a time, in a cabin far from the city, there lived a happy man. He spent every morning tending the vegetables that grew in his garden; at noon he cooled off in the nearby river, and afterwards he would put on his boots to take a long walk until suppertime.

One day, a reporter from the city came to interview him. At the end of a long list of questions about country living, the reporter asked, "What makes you so happy?"

The man smiled a big smile, looked out over the beautiful valley, and said, "I'm happy because no matter how much I know or knew, how great or little I do, how short or far I go, how young or old I grow, I'm always a part of Nature." And so, my friend, are you.





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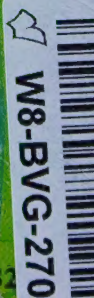


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